

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 16, 2012

Agenda Item: 2012 – 2013 Hunting Season Dates

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 minutes

Background

Season dates are currently adopted biennially for all game species. This happens every other winter with adoptions in December and Final adoptions in February. These dates are a combination of fixed dates (mountain grouse season Sept. 1 opener) and “formula” dates (general deer and elk is defined by counting backwards five weeks from Thanksgiving Sunday). For the “formula” dates, there is an annual change due to the progression of the calendar from one year to another. That means at least one day’s difference and, periodically, nearly a full week. In some cases, these annual movements can place season dates in conflict with public expectations or traditions. Some specific areas have exceptions to these general statewide dates by species. Those exceptions are also proposed again for 2012 and 2013 or are proposed to be different within individual species-specific proposals.

For the 2012 and 2013 season, proposed changes include the annual progression of the calendar and the 2013 general deer and elk season closing on Dec. 1—also the first day of the winter mountain lion season with dogs. Additionally, the proposed 2013 two-day statewide youth deer hunting season overlaps the last Thursday and Friday of the traditional statewide archery season.

For other proposed changes or identification of specific dates by species, see proposed date table and FWP Commission Master List for February Commission meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Hunting season date comments were diverse relative to the youth deer season as well as the overall timing of the general deer/elk rifle season. Public comment ran thru 5 p.m., Jan. 23, with comments forwarded to FWP staff and the FWP Commission. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 16 commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2011 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting date formulas given the progression of the annual calendar (dates would fall on weekdays instead of weekends).

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationales for individual proposals are included in commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Feb. 16 commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the commission adopt the final 2012 and 2013 Hunting Seasons Dates as proposed by FWP.